

Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-11 ISO-00 HA-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-05 H-01 INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 OMB-01 TRSE-00 IO-13 /106 W

-----034757 062228Z /70

R 051750Z MAY 78

FM AMEMBASSY BAMA KO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9384

INFO AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY CONAKRY

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, ML

SUBJ: CONSENSUAL DEMOCRACY IN LOCAL PARTY UNITS

REF: BAMA KO 1786

1. THE PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING LOCAL UNITS OF MALI'S NEW NATIONAL POLITICAL PARTY, THE DEMOCRATIC UNION OF THE MALIAN PEOPLE (UDPM), IS NOW LARGELY COMPLETE IN RURAL AREAS, WITH VILLAGE UNITS CHOSEN AND SUBSECTIONS OF THE PARTY ELECTED AT THE "ARRONDISSEMENT" ADMINISTRATIVE LEVEL. PRESIDENT TRAORE INAUGURATED THE PROCEDURE WITH A PROCLAMATION APRIL 10 (REFTEL). THE SAME DAY, OTHER MEMBERS OF THE MILITARY COMMITTEE FOR NATIONAL LIBERATION (CMLN) BEGAN VISITING REGIONAL CAPITALS WHERE THEY GAVE INSTRUCTIONS TO GROUPS OF MILITARY OFFICERS WHO WERE TO CARRY THE CAMPAIGN TO THE LOCAL LEVEL.

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2. MILITARY TEAMS OF FIVE (ONE OFFICER AND FOUR NON-COMS) THEN VISITED VILLAGES, WHERE THEY PRESIDED OVER SELECTION OF SIX TO EIGHT MEMBERS OF LOCAL POLITICAL COMMITTEES, THEN TOURED ARRONDISSEMENTS, WHERE VILLAGE UNITS MET TO CHOOSE MEMBERS OF THE UDPM'S SUB-SECTIONS.

3. THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT THE MILITARY RELIED ON TRADITIONAL AND CONSENSUAL DEMOCRATIC PATTERNS IN SELECTION OF LOCAL PARTY LEADERS. IN A RECENT UP-COUNTRY TRIP, POL OFF TALKED WITH LOCAL POLITICAL LEADERS INCLUDING A SECRETARY GENERAL OF ONE VILLAGE POLITICAL COMMITTEE AND A TREASURER OF ANOTHER. THE SECRETARY GENERAL HAD BEEN DESIGNATED TO HEAD UP THE VILLAGE POLITICAL COMMITTEE BY VILLAGE ELDERS DURING HIS ABSENCE. THE TREASURER HAD BEEN PART OF A SELECTION PROCESS IN WHICH MILITARY AUTHORITIES ASKED ASSEMBLED VILLAGERS FOR CANDIDATES. REPRESENTATIVES OF YOUTH, OLD PEOPLE, WORKERS, AND WOMEN WERE THEN ASKED THEIR OPINION OF CANDIDATES. ONLY THOSE CANDIDATES THAT APPEALED TO ALL GROUPS WERE RETAINED. LEADERS INTERVIEWED REPORTED ON ONE VILLAGE IN THE NORTHERN SAHELIAN ZONE WHICH REFUSED TO LET ANY PERSON WHO HAD BEEN AWAY TO SCHOOL REPRESENT THEM ON THE VILLAGE COMMITTEE.

4. THE SECRETARY GENERAL AND THE TREASURER SAID THAT ELECTION OF MEMBERS TO THE PARTY'S SUB-SECTIONS OCCASIONED HOT ARGUMENTS OVER QUALIFICATIONS OF RESPECTIVE CANDIDATES. THE ELECTION APPEARS TO HAVE BEEN QUITE OPEN WITH NO ATTEMPT BY MILITARY AUTHORITIES TO IMPOSE A PRE-SELECTED LIST. BOTH LEADERS CONSIDERED THEIR NEW POLITICAL DUTIES SOMEWHAT ONEROUS AND TREATED THE RE-CREATION OF POLITICAL LIFE AT VILLAGE LEVEL WITH LIGHT BUT CAUSTIC HUMOR. THEY, NONETHELESS, SAW THEIR PARTICIPATION AS A NECESARY OBLIGATION TO THEIR VILLAGES.

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5. THE QUESTION AT HAND IS, WHAT DO THESE POLITICAL UNITS DO NOW THAT THEY HAVE BEEN FORMED AND HAVE DISCHARGED THEIR RESPONSIBILITY OF ELECTING THE PARTY'S SUB-SECTIONS? THE ANSWER TO THAT WILL INDICATE A LOT ABOUT THE REAL DIRECTION PARTY POLITICS WILL TAKE IN THE NEW MALI. THE INITIAL STEPS OFFER HOPEFUL SIGNS OF THE CMLN'S OPPENNESS TO PEOPLE'S WISHES AND WILLINGNESS TO LET PARTICIPATORY DEMOCRACY TAKE ITS COURSE, AT LEAST AT THE LOCAL LEVEL.

BYRNE

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